

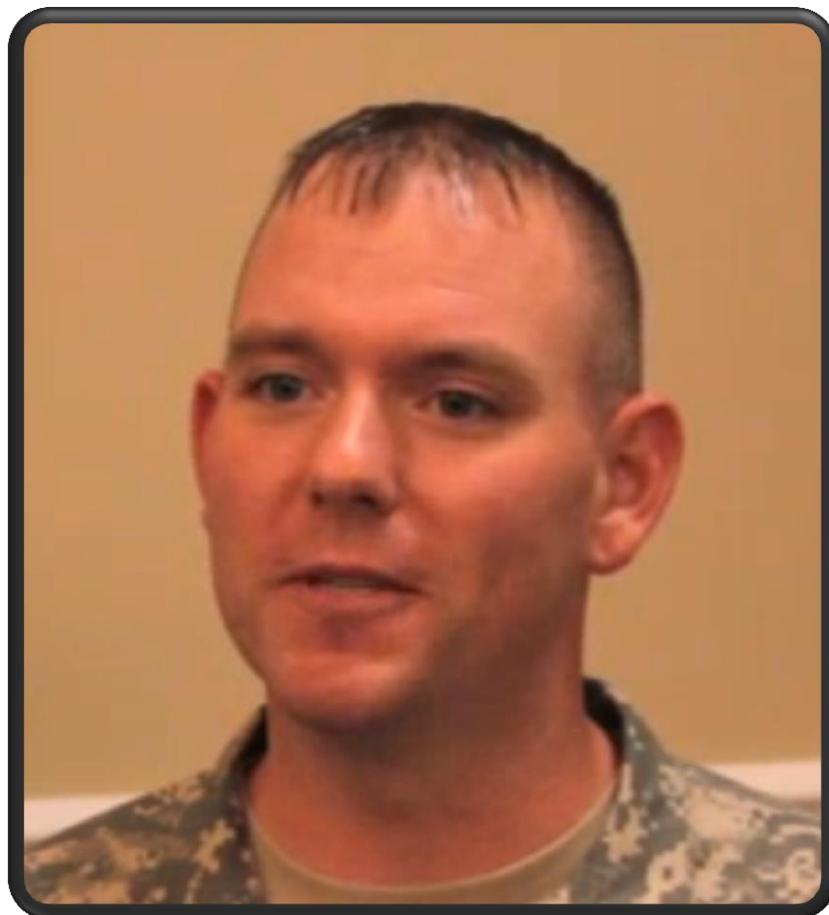


# Case-Ex<sup>®</sup> Video: *"Turning Point"* Discussion Guide



Published: March 2013 in <http://cape.army.mil>

## "Turning Point"



# CASE-EX® VIDEO VIGNETTE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

For all members of the Army Profession

<http://cape.army.mil>

## “Turning Point”

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## BASIC CONCEPTS

- ☐ Watch the video and read the transcript prior to discussion.
- ☐ Review “Facilitation Best Practices.”
- ☐ See “Additional Resources” for more content.
- ☐ Think about a personal experience, story, or event that relates to the scenario and consider using this as a way to start the discussion.
- ☐ Present each part of the vignette and lead an open discussion that relates to a desired learning outcome. Use the “Sample Discussion Questions” to help you prepare questions.
- ☐ After watching and discussing each part of the story, identify the takeaways and discuss how each participant will apply this experience.

## FACILITATION: BEST PRACTICES

The facilitators’ main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at-hand. This module contains two rounds of discussion and ends with time to reflect on personal stories and vignettes that relate to the module.

Here are some key points to consider when preparing to facilitate a discussion:

- ☐ Let participants do most of the talking.
- ☐ The facilitators’ key role is to ask questions that spark thought and conversation.
- ☐ Ensure you engage everyone within your group and set the conditions for them to share thoughts openly. Do not let any one person or contingent dominate the conversation.
- ☐ Have questions prepped for each round to drive the conversation. Ask open-ended questions and encourage participants to elaborate on their answers/thoughts.

You are the catalyst for conversation. Make sure you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper. *For more information and guidelines on facilitating professional development discussions, visit the CAPE Website at <http://cape.army.mil>.*

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: PART 1



“My first assignment was as a platoon leader. It was a very difficult time for me in my young career. (I) was faced with a lot of challenges that I didn’t think I’d be faced with at that particular time. My Battalion Commander called me into his office one day and offered me a new job and I asked him if I had a choice. He said no I don’t, so I was assigned as the Battalion Signal Officer.

I was very eager to fit in with my new boss and my Soldiers. There were a lot of missions to plan for. I remember sitting down in my first staff planning session pretty much saying ‘Yes’ to everything that came out of the Battalion S3’s mouth. Nobody ever prepared me for what the rules and responsibilities were.

I had (come) into a very historic unit. (There was) a lot of esprit de corps. I was able to integrate myself into those particular aspects of the job but the technical portion of the job I was not

certified to do. I had not been to any formal schooling on the staff planning process – a lot of the technical aspects of radios and communications planning. Those were my significant shortfalls. I didn’t use the human resources available to me to help me form those decisions.

I was always eager to say ‘Yes,’ for the simple fact that being a very headstrong second lieutenant – a very invincible feeling that I definitely lost sight of the bigger picture. I was very near-sighted. This went on for a period of roughly six months.

I could see my Soldiers getting frustrated. Some were getting into trouble at and away from work. It finally came to the point where my platoon sergeant pulled me off to the side and said, “Hey Sir, we need to talk.” In my mind, I had no idea what we were going to talk about. I didn’t think I was doing anything wrong.

It was probably a good hour-long conversation we had about how the Soldiers were frustrated and how I was committing them to things that I wouldn’t normally or somebody else wouldn’t normally commit them to.”

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: PART 2



“After that hour, he clearly painted a picture to me of exactly what I was doing in my own eagerness to fit in and be accepted by my peers, my subordinates and my boss. I had worked entirely too hard, and it was showing. We were not completing missions in a timely manner, or not at all in some cases. It was reflecting poorly on the team as a whole, not just myself.

I looked for acceptance from people in groups to justify what I was doing. It was definitely a hard look at myself and a willingness to change. We came up with this

strategy which was a good opportunity for me to reflect and take a look back at myself and what I was doing wrong. After we did that, I fixed a lot of the personal issues that I had. It allowed us to do our Hurricane Katrina mission, our Joint Readiness Training Center pre-deployment, and then our 15-month deployment to Iraq with a lot less issues than we had going into it.

In my mind I didn't believe that I was trying to make myself look good. I was personally looking for acceptance, but once again I didn't have the necessary knowledge base or certification to do that job in the first place. A lot of it was on-the-job training and my platoon sergeant definitely had a big role in holding me accountable and developing me as a leader.

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: PART 3



It's a lot easier to say 'Yes' than to say 'No.' It's something that has to be developed. He saw that. It could have negatively impacted my career, and it was

definitely negatively impacting the Soldiers.

I think a combination of those two is the reason why he pulled me to the side. I think that I was always open and honest with him to the point where he developed a vested interest in me, and vice-versa. He saw that I needed mentorship and guidance and was willing to give that to me. In turn, he taught me that I should take interest in my Soldiers more than I was doing, and definitely help develop my skills as a mentor and a leader. Luckily for me, not only did my platoon sergeant see that after a period of six months,

but my immediate supervisor and my commander both saw that I needed some guidance and mentorship.

They, in a constructive way, took me under their wing and explained the staff planning process to me. They gave me mentorship and leadership tools that I could use for my NCOs and Soldiers. It was a definite help in reaching the peak and getting over to the side. For the first six months, it was pretty much an uphill battle every day. I definitely took a hard look at myself and tried to fix those actions.

### **As a steward of the Army Profession, who are you mentoring?**

I'm definitely having people hold me accountable for my actions. It really made me understand that I'm just Captain Boyd. I am just one guy, but I am part of something bigger than me."

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available:



### **Center for the Army Profession and Ethic:**

Visit the CAPE Army Profession Website:

<http://cape.army.mil/AAOP/aaop.php>



### **Official Homepage of the US Army:**

[http://www.army.mil/article/91556/Operation\\_Solemn\\_Promise\\_Soldiers\\_civilians\\_asked\\_to\\_recommit\\_themselves\\_to\\_Army\\_Values/](http://www.army.mil/article/91556/Operation_Solemn_Promise_Soldiers_civilians_asked_to_recommit_themselves_to_Army_Values/)

## SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### PART 1: Discussing 2LT Boyd's Story

#### [Watch "Turning Point" – Part 1]

1. 2LT Boyd says he was "very eager to fit in with his new boss." What does Boyd's eagerness to fit in to the organization tell us about his character and commitment as an Army Professional?
2. What influenced 2LT Boyd to respond to the pressures of his job in the manner he did?
3. As a Second Lieutenant, Boyd recalls himself saying "yes to everything that came out of his commander's mouth."
  - a. Why is it important for a leader to be aware of his/her strengths, abilities and constraints?
  - b. How much latitude is appropriate for an Army Professional to take when assessing his/her ability to accomplish a given task?
  - c. Describe an instance when a leader should *never* say 'no' or "push back" to his/her commander, and simply find a way to get the mission accomplished.
4. 2LT Boyd says he should have used the resources available to him to better inform his decisions. What recourses did he have? Are you making full use of your resources?
5. 2LT describes the unit as "very historic" and filled with esprit de corps. What does this mean? How did this impact 2LT Boyd's decisions and actions as a junior leader?
6. How does the culture and climate of 2LT Boyd's unit affect his identity as a younger, less experienced professional leader?
7. Because of his inability to say 'no' and wanting to appear competent in his duties, 2LT Boyd overcommitted his Soldiers to tasks that eventually degraded their trust in him. As a leader, what choices are you making that could degrade your Soldiers' trust in your leadership? How do your decisions and behaviors impact those you are directly responsible for?

## PART 2: Discussing 2LT Boyd's Story

### [Watch "Turning Point" – Part 2]

1. 2LT Boyd said, "I looked for acceptance from people in groups to justify what I was doing." Are there factors in your life you are using to 'justify' your behaviors? What are those behaviors, and how are you justifying them in your professional life?
2. 2LT Boyd demonstrated a willingness to change. After closely examining your actions, are there behaviors you need to change? If so, are you willing to make those changes?
3. 2LT Boyd said his platoon sergeant realized he needed mentorship and guidance, and was willing to offer him that assistance. Who in your life is/would be a good mentor, and why? What role does a mentor have in the professional development of a Soldier and leader in the Army Profession?
4. How did 2LT Boyd's platoon sergeant act as a steward of the Profession by approaching and mentoring him? What level of responsibility do more senior, experienced Soldiers and DA Civilians have in stewarding the Profession and why?
5. 2LT Boyd said, "I look for acceptance from people in groups." Why is it important 2LT Boyd understands what is driving his behaviors? How might this self-awareness impact his actions and decisions in future leadership positions?

## PART 3: 2LT Boyd's Reflection

### [Watch "Turning Point" – Part 3]

1. When is the last time you've "taken a hard look" at yourself? Why is self-reflection a critical task as a professional? Why is it often overlooked? What formal and informal structures exist within the Army to develop and inform a leader's awareness of their behaviors impact on their subordinates?
2. If you were 2LT Boyd's first line supervisor, how would you have responded to this situation? If you were 2LT Boyd's platoon sergeant, how would you have addressed this situation?
3. Army Professionals must demonstrate and continually develop their competence, character and commitment. Describe what levels of each criterion 2LT Boyd excelled in, or was lacking in this situation.
  - a. How has CPT Boyd's professional identity changed since this experience as a new 2LT? How has that impacted his character development?
  - b. What can you infer about 2LT Boyd's competence compared to CPT Boyd's competence?
  - c. How has CPT Boyd's development as a more competent, self-aware and mature leader impacted his level of commitment to the Army Profession?
4. How did 2LT Boyd's military expertise develop as a result of this experience? Consider the development of his military/technical, moral/ethical, and his human-development expertise. How do these different aspects combine to develop his overall competency as an Army professional?
5. CPT Boyd says, "I am just one guy, but I am part of something bigger than me." How does this reflect on his commitment to the Army Profession? Why does he consider himself a professional?

## AAR/CHECK ON LEARNING

### Personal Vignettes and Takeaways

*Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.*

**It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing the significance of CPT Boyd's story. Soldiers should walk away with a better understanding of the decision point, and be able to properly convey the importance of the decision-making process to Soldiers in their unit.**

**Upon concluding, the following questions are useful for determining learning and promoting reflection:**

<b>Learning</b>	Q - What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of other leaders?  Q - What are the future implications of this decision and or experience?
<b>Reflection</b>	Q - How do you feel/what do you think about what you learned?  Q - What will you do with your new information?  Q – How can you apply this experience to better develop yourself and your fellow professionals?